Average Time Taken to Reserve a Single Berth in Delhi

2744. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the average time taken to reserve a single berth in Delhi is 75 minutes or more;

(b) whether it is a fact that the public is severely harassed by the long delays in purchasing a ticket;

(c) whether any senior Railway officers have visited various Reservation booking Centers in Delhi to meet with the public; and

(d) if so, the details of such visits in the current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) The maximum waiting time for a passenger in queue vary from 45 to 75 minutes during summer period depending upon the time the passenger joins in the queue for seeking reservation.

(c) and (d) During the summer rush period from April to June, 1998 special arrangements were made by Northern Railway in Delhi area to monitor the working of the reservation offices in Delhi at the level of officers who remained there daily for about four hours in the morning. In addition, railway staff was also deputed to check the requisition forms of the passengers waiting in the hall to scrutinise and initial their requis-tion forums, besides, inspections were also done by senior officers at various locations.

Printed versions of 'Wealth of India'

2745. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:'

(a) whether it is a fact that printed versions of Wealth of India (WOI) published NISCOM since 1948 have come to a stop since 1992;

(b) whether it is also a fact that currently only CD-ROM versions of WOI are produced and the copyright of these belong exclusively to AHEAD;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the views of the Government on this in the light of the fact that expenditure incurred on this account is exclusively borne by the NISCOM?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) No Sir. Reprints of various volumes of Wealth of India (WOI) brought out since 1992 are as follows:

Volume V	—	1997
Volume VII	—	1997
Volume VIII	—	1995
Volume IX X & XII	—	1995
Volume IV & VI	—	1995
(supplements)	—	1997

Member organisations contribute to AHEAD, information and database inputs over which they hold copyright.

(c) Does not airse.

(d) It is not correct that the expenditure is exclusively borne by NISCOM. Infact, AHEAD is supported by funds from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Canada and NISCOM as lead organisation member has committed to provide infrastructural and a limited technical manpower sup-port.

Scientists working in AHEAD

2746. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question No. 1196 given the Rajya Sabha on 5th June, 1998 and state:

(a) whether 23 Scientists/employees working in the AHEAD out of total 25 persons employed can be termed as Limited Technical Support;

(b) the exact nature of revenue sharing between AHEAD and NISCOM since the AHEAD operates a separate bank account; and

(c) the details of expenditure incurred upon the AHEAD office set up in NISCOM premises and income accured to NISCOM through this AHEAD project?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) It is not true that 23 Scientists are working for Asian Health and Allied Data (AHEAD). The Scientists of the Wealth of India (WOI) Division of the National Institute of Science Communication (NISCOM) are engaged in revising and updating the information on the natural resources of the country. These scientists have been doing this work even before AHEAD came into existence. AHEAD is engaged in production of two series of CD-ROMs. One of these, Environment and Health. Asia has no contribution from NISCOM whatsoever, the other, Wealth Asia contain databases from other institu tions besides those from NISCOM. A group of 5 Scientists/ Employees, besides their other duties/ responsibilities, provide the limited technical support to convert the pertinent information into electronic form ie. CDs.

(b) and (c) Sixty percent (60%) of the net revenue generated by way of sales of the CD-ROMs is to be retained by AHEAD for meeting future expenditure after International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Canada, funding ceases in the year 2000. The remaining 40% is to be shared equally by nine member organisations contributing data to a particular CD-ROM disk. NISCOM contributes data to Wealth Asia series of AHEAD CD-ROMs and thus is entitled to sharing of royalty/revenue generated through sales of this series of disks and is expected to receive income as per the formula. A wing of the floor that houses NISCOM, is shared by AHEAD with Electronic Publishing Division (EPD). The renovation work, which included providing airconditioners, UPS, furniture etc., was carried out in this wing at the cost of Rs. 2.54 lacs.

Cyclone in Gujral

2747. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there was communication gap between the Meteorological Department and the Government of Gujrat about the severity of cyclone in Gujrat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the signal No. 4 was shown at Port instead of signal No. 10;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) who is responsible for this grave error resulting into death of hundreds of innocent persons?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) No, Sir. IMD first informed Government of Gujrat about the movement of cyclone towards Gujrat coast on 6th June, 1998 by telephone. A formal cyclone alert was issued by IMD at 1730 Hours on 7th June, 1998 when the system was categorised as Very Severe Cyclonic Storm and likely to cross Gujrat coast causing adverse weather, this alert message contained information about the severity of the cyclone and the adverse weather likely to occur in the coastal areas of Gujrat. Further alerts were issued every 3 hours. Cyclone Warning was issued at 1200 Hours on 8th June.

(c) to (e) On the basis of an assessment of the severity and direction of the cyclone, IMD advi